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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: IBRAHIM GAMBARI ON NIGERIA'S UNSC SEAT AND SUDAN

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Dundas C. McCullough for Reasons
1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

[11](#). (C) DCM met senior Nigerian diplomat Ibrahim Gambari December 7 to discuss the Government of Nigeria's (GON) upcoming non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council beginning January 1. Gambari said Nigeria is inclined to speak "not only for Africa, but beyond the continent." He expressed concern that the GON is ill-prepared to take up its seat? on the Security Council, and advised us to reach out to the presidency on key multilateral issues. Gambari also discussed his upcoming responsibilities in Darfur. End Summary.

NIGERIA AS LEADER IN AF

[12](#). (C) Senior Nigerian diplomat Ibrahim Gambari told DCM December 7 that "for better or worse, Nigeria is in charge of everything in Africa." Nigeria's former foreign minister and permanent representative to the UN said he does not often publicly speak out on domestic issues, but felt compelled to do so when President Yar'Adua refrained from attending the last UNGA session. Gambari called Obama a "transformational president" who invited Nigeria's Head of State to participate in the Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) session since Nigeria is the fourth-largest TCC to peacekeeping missions worldwide. He judged that Yar'Adua--and Nigeria--missed out on a opportunity to highlight the country's leadership. Gambari commented that "at least the Vice President should have been sent; I pleaded, but nobody listened."

UPCOMING UNSC SEAT

[13](#). (C) Gambari said it is Nigeria's "inclination to be a member that can speak with authority and responsibility, not only for Africa, but beyond the continent." Gambari underscored that last time the GON was on the UNSC, every Security Council Mission to Africa was Nigeria-led (by Gambari). He said there will likely be a team in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) backstopping the GON Mission in New York, but to date it has not been organized. He expected the GON capacity at their Mission in New York to "be enhanced." However, he currently does not see it

happening but speculated that "they will rush this at the last minute."

INFLUENCING UN VOTES IN NIGERIA

14. (C) DCM expressed disappointment with the GON's vote against the Canadian-led resolution on Iran (a departure from last year's abstention), noting Nigeria's vote did not help burnish the country's democratic credentials. Gambari explained that the MFA is second to the presidency when it comes to taking sensitive votes. He recommended that we reach out to retired Ambassador Jibrin Chinade who is President Yar'Adua's special adviser on foreign policy. While Chinade might not always give us the answers we want, Gambari said, "he would be accessible and in a position to explain authoritatively GON positions." (Note: We are requesting a meeting with Chinade.)

DARFUR, SUDAN

15. (C) Gambari said he has a steep learning curve as he takes up his new duties January 1 as head of the UN-African Union Peacekeeping Force in Darfur since he has not covered QUnion Peacekeeping Force in Darfur since he has not covered African issues during the last three years. He added as challenges: Sudan's vastness, the hybrid nature of the mission in which he "will be serving two masters," and the contrasting expectations of the AU and UN. Gambari noted he would be based in El Fasher, since his "predecessor never went there, and stayed in Khartoum." Gambari said he would seek close consultations with the USG to "harmonize policy." He noted he had already met with S/E Gration and would continue to coordinate with the USG. He asked for logistical support, "such as the promised attack helicopters, which would be extremely helpful to protect civilian populations." Asked about Sudan's upcoming election and referendum on the south, he stated, "the north cannot, and will not accept southern independence." Gambari said he understands the "north is not making unity attractive," but the USG should support what he termed a "one-Sudan policy."

SANDERS